BLUE

saturation vol.1

UofT's only music magazine presents their first print issue of 2025.

DEMO

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to Demo Magazine's first issue of the year! We're thrilled to have you. This is one of three volumes under this year's overarching theme of Saturation. Blue is a love letter to all things sad, introspective, and moody. We know that this time of year invites its fair share of melancholy, between finals season, shrinking days, and the impending winter freeze, but we hope this issue can help you feel less blue. From Phoebe Bridgers to Blue Velvet, there's plenty to dive into. If you're looking for something more upbeat, our Red issue is coming at you soon. Thank you to all the wonderful writers, designers, and photographers who made this magazine possible, and we hope to see you again soon!

Finch, Shayla, Alec, and Serena

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Jesus Christ, I'm so Blue All the Time!

A Blue Analysis of Stranger in the Alps

Written by Melanie Monaco

As a child, my favourite colour was blue. I wanted nothing more than to one day dye my hair, a neon shock on my head in the colour of both the sky and the sea. For most of my life, this colour of the rainbow seemed to define me. In recently coming back to myself, the one thing that seemed to bring me closest to the person I was in previous years was finally returning to my blue hair. It has, and always will be, the answer to, "Who are you?" Well, I'm Blue, of course. Who are you?

I remember the first time I had ever heard a Phoebe Bridgers song. I was barely 16, standing alone in the dark of my kitchen. My best friend had sent me a playlist, and Bridgers' cover of "You Missed My Heart" by Mark Kozelek, she had said, was the one I just had to listen to first. So I did. I fell down a rabbit hole, and did not emerge again until a year later.

This version of Kozelek's song is so infinitely blue that it hurts. Despite not being the songwriter, Bridgers makes the track sound desperate and so utterly grounded in her own experiences that it was a shock to realize that they weren't. Even Kozelek himself thinks the same, saying in an interview, "It's good because when [Phoebe sings] it, I forget that the words are mine." Now obviously, Bridgers wasn't in jail and did not face capital punishment, but it feels that way simply because she sings, so achingly, with the pain of someone who has. Her voice itself, minding my language, is just so goddamn blue.

me, not so blue, age 5

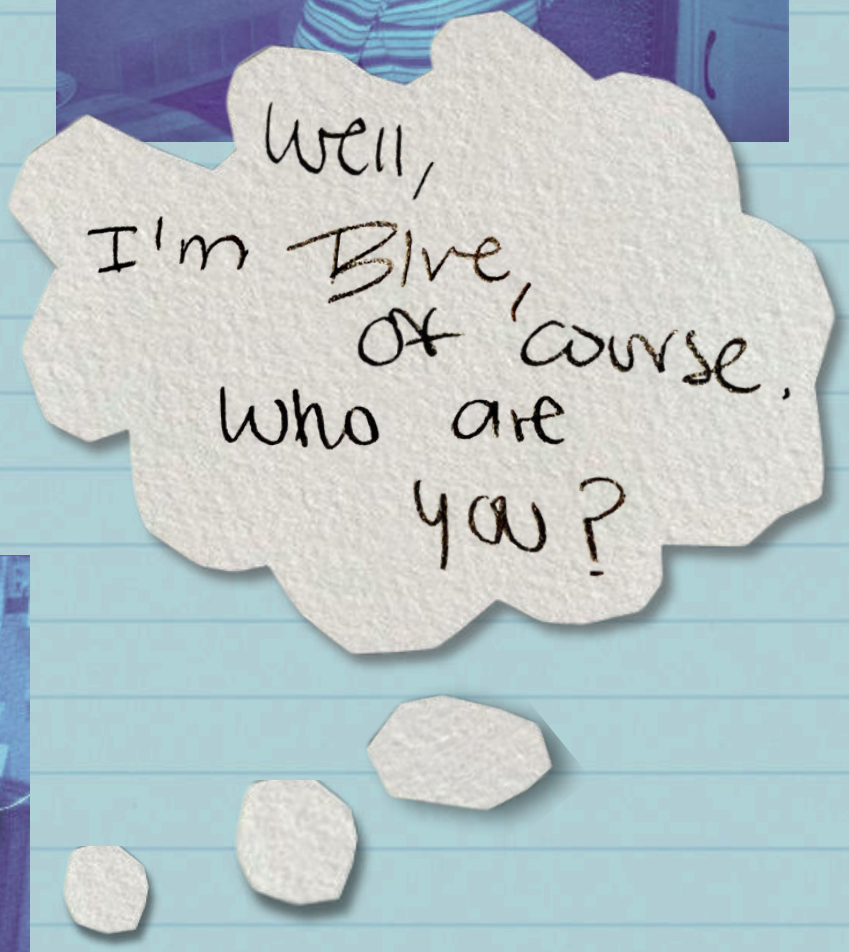
That winter was a brutal one, and I spent most of it with my headphones in, listening to *Stranger in the Alps* and *Punisher* on repeat. It was all that I listened to, and, consequently, blue was all that I felt. Maybe it's the title—an unfamiliar person in the middle of nowhere—or the cover, which features a ghost drawn over Phoebe's childhood self, standing against a farm all bathed in a blue-toned filter, that elicits these emotions in me most. However, her younger self being nothing more than a ghost highlights only a small snippet of what the album presents. It is a testament to relationships, death, and heartache. I think, more than anything, that it is a comment on self-identity and navigating past traumas in a present world. She delves into what it means to realize that you're mortal, and the consequent emotions that follow that understanding.

The overwhelming feeling that this album gave me, as I walked the streets of my hometown post-sunset during that icy season, was melancholia. A feeling so common with Bridgers' music, and so common with the idea of feeling blue. Even now, it is hard to navigate exactly what "feeling blue" means. What does it really mean to be blue? Is it just my hair colour or is it something deeper? Is it an emotion I can hardly name, so much so that all I say to describe it is assign it to a colour? Bridgers tries to pin it down in her song "Funeral" in which she sings, "Jesus Christ, I'm so blue all the time/And that's just how I feel/Always have and always will." An obvious choice—however, it rings true in describing the feelings this album evokes.

I spent most of that winter alone with my music. I had a different lunch period than my friends, so I missed our gossip sessions over homemade sandwiches and going out to the mall. I had to spend those previously shared hours alone, but eventually I got used to the solitude. It seemed to match well with my chosen soundtrack. *Stranger in the Alps* seemed to understand my loneliness in a way no one in my life could—seemed to see it and speak to it. It seemed to match well, too, with the weather: constantly dark and cloudy, though unexpectedly, cast over with a light shade of blue.

At 14, when I was just learning how to write poetry, I wrote a piece on blue hour. The period of time between sunset and twilight, where the world is painted in a light shade of cyan or teal. I said it was fragile, this shade of blue, because of how temporary it was. It barely lasted an hour, even 30 minutes, and then it was gone. Now, this poem isn't anything to write home about, but it gets my point across decently well. *Stranger in the Alps*, for me, feels the same as this hour of the day does. Fragile, near-death, but so unbelievably beautiful. Real, raw, and blue.

As I've aged, I've found myself relating to Bridgers' music differently. "Scott Street" meant much less to me before graduation. I've begun to have check-in and "how are you?" conversations with my previously closest friends. I keep reminding myself, and them, "don't be a stranger." The concept itself, to be a stranger to someone I used to love so vehemently, is so blue, isn't it? The song itself sounds like the silence in between words of a static conversation. The feelings that come with realizing I have no idea what this person is doing in their life anymore, and the awkwardness of not knowing how to navigate talking to them again.



Lorde was right, in her (predominantly blue-feeling!) song "Stoned at the Nail Salon," when she said that "all the music you loved at 16 you'll grow out of." I did, eventually, grow out of my obsession with Phoebe Bridgers. However, in the years since, I've come back to *Stranger in the Alps* after realizing that nobody does blue quite like Bridgers does.

These days, now three years removed from that winter, *Stranger in the Alps* reminds me most of the days I spent holed up in my bedroom, watching the snow fall outside and pile up high against the walls of my home. The snow seemed to act as a barrier to the rest of the world, keeping me in my solitude. It reminds me most, though, of the girl that I used to be. The one I am slowly, but ever so surely, making my way back to, in the littlest of things, and in the bluest of hair colours.

Designed by Miya Mastrofini

BROCKHAMPTON
YOU HAD TO BE THERE

by Alan Minkovich

I'm beginning to reach the age where music acts I followed as a teenager are becoming markers of a bygone era. I'm going to be 25 in December, and (hopefully) reaching the end of my graduate studies—officially hitting "unc status." It's fun to reminisce on the music that I was so hyperfixated on almost a decade ago. The one that really stands out to me is BROCKHAMPTON. In more ways than any other music act I intimately followed, they were a flash in the pan. Out of nowhere, my YouTube feed was filled with music videos from this group of twenty-somethings, all rapping while doused in blue paint. They sang about their frustrations with the world, as they danced through the suburbs of Texas and destroyed the house where all of them lived. Right as they were beginning to get some traction, Anthony Fantano co-signed them with a 9/10 on their debut album, *SATURATION*, and after that, things just blew up. They were infiltrating the mainstream in that sweet spot where you could throw them on the aux in your friend's car and not get any side-eyes, but before they could reach the ubiquity of being played at a McDonald's or Walmart.

I could give a whole sermon about their innovative beats or how their lyrics felt like a breath of fresh air in the hip-hop scene of the mid-2010s, but what interests me the most is the way the band just completely took over the lives of its listeners. I think a lot of it comes down to the aesthetic and the sincerity in their work. The group was an endless hodgepodge of singers, rappers, producers, editors, graphic designers—you name it. It felt like the bounds of BROCKHAMPTON really knew no limits, almost like anyone could become a member. Which included the fans. What really sold it was the blue paint—this iconic imagery of the band in blue face paint became a unifying symbol, with fans imitating the style at their shows. Sadly, I wasn't able to attend their first show in Toronto at the Danforth Music Hall and had to settle for seeing the highlights of the night in a YouTube documentary. So I saved my blue face paint for another day.

Just as quickly as it took over, it all went away. The warning signs were there when the band ditched their independent status and signed with RCA. Soon after, one of their members was ousted after sexual assault allegations sprung up. The music and aesthetic after these two huge shifts in the band's history took a lot away from their DIY aesthetic. The band became less about the collective, the idea that anyone could be BROCKHAMPTON, and became more about the band's internal suffering at the revelation that one of their own committed heinous acts. The blue paint was never mentioned again after this era and there was no longer something to imitate. When I finally did get my chance to see them live, it wasn't at a small venue, but at Coca-Cola Coliseum. In the large arena it was harder to feel connected to the band, and it felt like I got swept away by the crowd. Which did also literally happen, as the entirety of general admission moshed from opening to encore.

The quality of the music initially stayed solid for a few albums, but after splitting and releasing two break-up albums that completely paled compared to earlier material, the band ended with a thud rather than a bang. I largely stopped listening to them entirely at this point, feeling like my tastes had evolved and I was too 'mature' for them now. It didn't help that the fanbase became associated with rabid Twitter stans that posted toxic content 24/7. Still, part of me does miss those first few months during the *SATURATION* era. I miss the days when I told my friend that I thought BROCKHAMPTON would be the next Nirvana—one of the coldest takes I've EVER had in hindsight. Even more, I miss when I saw those blue faces causing havoc in suburban Texas and thought, "Damn. I want to make something creative too."

designed by Manu Rocha

The Mother of My Blues

Written by Lauren Amitirigala

Designed by Louise Lee

I'll be honest and admit that I was introduced to Ma Rainey, the mother of the blues, through a Les Misérables fanfiction. The protagonist traipses around her apartment, daydreams about her crush, and sings "Prove It On Me Blues" to herself. It's a fitting inclusion for the story, which centers around a secret society of lesbians in 1950s America—Rainey is widely considered to have been bisexual, and the song is known for its lesbian themes. "Went out last night, with a crowd of my friends," she drawls in the pre-chorus, "it must have been women, cause I don't like no men." I grinned the first time I heard this for myself, and I'll probably grin the thousandth time I listen to it. Rainey constructs a gleeful cry of defiance: you can accuse me of sexual deviance, she tells you, but "you sure got to prove it on me!" In every song of hers I know, that spite blazes out of her mighty voice. It yanks my anger out of me and says, I'm scowling right beside you.

That experience is the magic of the blues, which held a singular space for the Black woman's rage. Classic female blues singers were unconcerned with making their laments palatable. These were women who moaned and dragged their voices into groans, who wailed for their lovers and cursed their enemies. Though they were vulnerable in heartbreak, they let their heartbreak boil over with hate. "Down Hearted Blues," written by Alberta Hunter, is as enraged as it is miserable. "I'm so disgusted, heartbroken too," Hunter trills, the pain reduced to an accompaniment to her scorn. Her song was properly propelled into fame by Bessie Smith, the "Empress of the Blues," who gives it a hardened edge. Hunter is worked-up and insistent, but Smith is grim, and this is especially reflected in how they end the song. "I've got the world in a jug, and the stopper in my hand/ You want me pretty papa, you've got to come under my command," Hunter finishes, mischievous in her threats. Smith alters the lyrics slightly: "I got the world in a jug, the stopper's in my hand/I'm going to hold it until you come under my command." Rather than a warning from her, you get a cold guarantee.

This iron-willed energy, expressed uniquely by every woman in the genre, shaped artists that came decades later. You can best see that in the music of the incomparable Nina Simone, who recorded two blues albums herself. Simone's biting contralto is perhaps the most famous thing about her, and when that voice takes on the blues, you hurt. Simone is made of unbridled power, her belts bringing emotion so strong to her recordings that tears spring to my eyes. My all-time favorite blues song is "I Want a Little Sugar In My Bowl," which Simone actually wrote with inspiration from Smith's "Need a Little Sugar in My Bowl." Even listening to it now I can feel my throat tightening. "Maybe I can fix things up so they'll go," she pushes out, adamant. "What's the matter, daddy?/Come on, save my soul." Her demands are earnest and contemptuous at once, drawn out over instrumentals almost brutal in their melancholia. She brings to life the fury of the blueswomen before her.

It's Ma Rainey you go to understand that fury in full. In "Black-Eye Blues," she renders the fury of a fictional Miss Nancy Ann, unafraid to feud with her husband even when punished for it. He strikes her down, and Rainey paints how she rises to her feet with a vicious promise: "You low-down alligator/Just watch me soon or later/Gonna catch you with your britches down." I always sing this lyric with extra feeling, immersed in how Rainey vividly sheds her narrator role to inhabit Nancy Ann's obstinate swear. I can imagine Nancy Ann, straight-backed and furious, lifting her chin and turning her nose up at her husband. The disobedience Rainey puts on display here had other implications, of course. The emphasis that some classic blueswomen placed upon their freedom and rage was considered unnatural and masculine—read: queer. Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith were actually rumoured lovers. One blues song that's even more explicitly lesbian than "Prove It On Me" is Lucille Bogan's "B.D. Woman's Blues," a butch anthem about so-called "bulldykes." "Coming a time, B.D. women ain't gon' need no men," Bogan affirms at the song's outset, and she doesn't stop there. She lets you know that these women can outdo men on top of rejecting them: "they can lay their jive just like a natural man." Bogan makes me feel the impacts of all the Black lesbians who came before me, who turned their noses up at the small lives they were told to inhabit. The blues are known for misery, but a song like Bogan's brings me joy.

Still, I find the music of these women most potent on my most pitiful days. Last December, the patter of rain would thrum under Bessie Smith's *Chicago Bound Blues Volume 1*, as I curled up half-asleep and ignored looming assignments. Similarly, Rainey's tales, heavy with suffering and spitting at your feet simultaneously, have become truly personal to me throughout the horrible year that I was 18. I like to listen to her *Complete 1928 Sessions* when I'm catatonic in bed with swollen eyes. I allow the static of a century-old recording to wash over me as I sink into the sturdy piano and the trumpet's scorn, and I let Ma tell me her troubles. One song, "Blame It On the Blues," resonates with me in particular. Rainey, plainly admitting to her sadness and anxiety, begs for a scapegoat to pin her troubles on, but finds no one, not her mother or father or brother, not her lovers either. "Can't blame nobody," she sings at last. "Yes, I'll have to blame it on the blues."

Ma Rainey embodied independence and righteous anger, but she was also a voice of pain, and that above everything is why I love her. I know her search for the source of her misery. I know her shrug of her shoulders as she resigns herself to melancholy. Her songs, and the songs of blueswomen, are what I go to when I don't have words for my sorrow. They have enough words for me.

INFINITY ON HIGH ON MORPHINE:

a Musical Retrospective of My Time in the Operating Room

I'm cold.

That's the first thing I think when they get me settled on the table. I'm naked, save for the rough, thin blue gown, and I'm freezing cold.

I've only been in the hospital for about a day, and I'm already exhausted. I didn't sleep last night. I was in too much pain, and there was obviously no time to nap when I got to the ER this morning. It's been about twenty-four hours since this started, I think. But I'm not really sure. They took my phone when they wheeled me away, and I was crying too much to check the time before they did. I know there's a clock in here, but I can't see it.

And I'm still cold. Oh. And starving. I haven't eaten all day, for obvious reasons.

Cold, naked, and hungry. What a combo. I fight back more tears as I lie on the operating table. I won't cry in front of these strangers.

These strangers who are waiting to look at my insides.

A voice pulls me out of the panic, before it can set in. It asks me if I want to hear some music before they put me under. I grin. I know exactly what I need.

When I ask them to play Fall Out Boy, one of the nurses smiles. She's a fan, too! I feel as comforted as I can be, in the middle of an operating room.

And when that guitar riff from "Thriller" fades in, the out-of-place Jay-Z spoken word overtop, I can't help but laugh—as much as I can without hurting myself. I almost feel stupid, making a room full of medical professionals listen to this—but it's overtaken by my realization of how absolutely hilarious it is that I'm here, now, listening to my favourite band as I'm about to be cut open. The thing about "Thriller," aside from the obvious *King of Pop* copyright infringement, is that it's absolutely polarizing. But it's only polarizing if you don't get it. From those muttered sentences over the opening—which, if you look far enough into it, is Patrick and Pete Wentz reading reviews of their previous album—to Andy Hurley's hardcore-inspired drums, all the way to Joe Trohman's killer riffs echoing over the last chorus, it's a song that knows exactly what it is. It's a love letter to the fans. It's a commentary on rising stars. It's a pop punk song featuring one of the biggest names in hip-hop. And it's the perfect album opener.

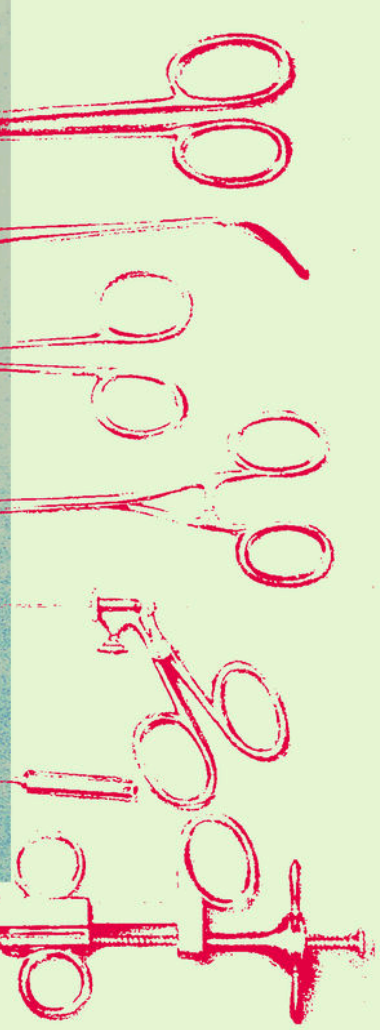
The perfect abdomen opener, too!

Then, that seamless transition. Leading right into "The Take Over, The Breaks Over" (quotation marks imperative) is another Joe-patented riff, accentuated by the occasional hand-clap beat. Patrick said in an interview that he wanted to write a song that centred entirely around a single riff… until that chorus hits. And, if it's not obvious, I'm entirely immersed in the music at this point. I almost don't notice that they haven't put me under yet.

Why haven't they?

Well, there's my answer. They tell me they haven't found a vein yet. No surprise when they told me not to drink water all day! I laugh and tell them I'm a hard poke.

Anyways, "This Ain't A Scene, It's An Arms Race" is on. Shut up, doctors!



"Arms Race" was… well, divisive. It's a funky, soul-inspired pop punk song about a dying scene and rising fame. Interesting! But backed by Patrick's yelps and Pete's cutting wordplay, it just works. God, I'd almost like to hear the whole album on this table. But I'll be out like a light soon enough.

I wish I could pay attention to every track and its musicality. But, exhausted from lack of sleep and spending the day in pain, I drift in and out as I lie in wait. Listening to the pure-soul vocals on the lengthily-titled "I'm Like A Lawyer With The Way I'm Always Trying To Get You Off (Me & You)", I feel myself lulled into security. Its classic Pete Wentz lyrics feel familiar, almost friendly, as I take deep breaths to ground myself. When "Hum Hallelujah" starts up, I perk up again. I tell the doctors I saw this song live (twice!), and laugh again as my favourite lyric blasts through the speakers. Patrick Stump singing "I love you in the same way/There's a chapel in a hospital" feels a little too on-the-nose for my current situation. But as I hear the opening piano chords of "Golden," I'm pulled back into serenity. I know it's not the morphine they gave me; I threw all of that up.

Tracks come and go: the horns-and-horny-lyrics of "Thnks Fr Th Mmrs," the cutting words of "Don't You Know Who I Think I Am?," the strings of "The (After) Life Of The Party." As the distorted guitars and Pete-Wentz-spoken-word-bridge from "The Carpal Tunnel Of Love" blare through the speakers, I'm thinking two things: the doctors must think I'm crazy, and why haven't they put me under yet?

Well, among other things, they still can't find a vein to stick me in. They're talking about using my neck. Or my feet. Ew. Also, OHFUCKINGNO. I shudder, but crack a joke to diffuse the mood. Not their mood. Mine. The doctors, obviously, don't care all that much. And just as I'm about to cry, I hear my favourite track off this album. One of my favourites of all time. The situationship favourite "Bang The Doldrums" is, in my opinion, one of Fall Out Boy's best tracks. If you disregard the fact that it was written for Shrek the Third—and further disregard the fact that it was not even used for *Shrek the Third*—and focus solely on the lyrics and music, you'll understand why I love this band so much.

More songs pass—the cocky witticisms of "Fame < Infamy," the God-given guitar walkups and walkdowns on "You're Crashing, But You're No Wave," and, of course, the album's killing closer, "I've Got All This Ringing In My Ears And None On My Fingers."

I honestly don't remember if I heard the bonus tracks—the cutting "G.I.N.A.S.F.S." or the droll final-final closer "It's Hard to Say "I Do", When I Don't." I do remember the album coming to a close, though. And asking myself what you, dear reader, are probably asking: why am I still listing tracks? Why am I still listening?

Well, of course, I'm still awake!

I would find out later that when they came to speak to my parents, my mom thought they were done. They hadn't even started!

Of course, I don't blame anyone. And I know the ins and outs of an emergent laparoscopic surgery are a deeply mundane thing to complain about, much less write about. But spending an hour in an OR, poked, prodded, and on the verge of tears, on top of everything else I had done that day, made that late April evening by far the worst day of this year.

But at least I had my favourite album with me. Now, when I think about *Infinity On High*, I don't think about it the way I used to. I don't just think about hearing it on my CD player, or my ancient iPod, or even my first cell phone all the way back in 2017.

I think about that operating room.

I think about that awful day.

I think about the fact that I'll probably have to do it all again.

But I also think about the fact that even through all of that, I had my favourite album. I had my favourite band. If I had no one else in that OR—other than the medical professionals trying to stick me with needles every five seconds—I had Fall Out Boy.

I write a lot about Fall Out Boy. I talk about them even more. And, generally, the gist of others' reactions is this: why am I so devoted to a band that doesn't know I exist? My answer is simple. Through everything in my life, there is music. And in music, there is my *favourite band*. And my favourite band, clearly, has been there for me through everything. Through the highs, through the lows, through the mediums that are not as exciting to write about.

Hell, they may as well have operated on me themselves.

That's the thing. That's what a good album can do for you. A good album can fix a bad day. A good album can take the best out of a mundane one. A truly good album can even make a great day awful, if you really think about it.

In the end… a good album can just make you feel less blue.

★★★★★

Written by V Riczker

Designed by Catherine Hou & Serena Hao

"BLUE": AN ACCUSATION FROM THE GUILTY CONSCIENCE

Written by
Ujin Munkh-Itgelt

Designed by
Serena Hao

I was introduced
the way back in
the floor of the lib
probably. I can o
I do remember c
guitar riffs, an a
the airy singing
Dawson. To the
behind this trac
someone got the
pissed.

When listening to
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vivid sights, soun
and comforted.
enveloped in turm
lyrics is what s
terrible happene
burned you and
towards a figure
you. "Blue" make
library floor, it
relationship throu
yourself, as if you
bitter, one-sided
you in anticipatio
like their song rec
really do.

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merely starting to
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hadn't experience
just yet. Hence, I
on a surface lev
were invisible to
viscerally enjoyed
being able to poi
excursions. How
bluntly and so me

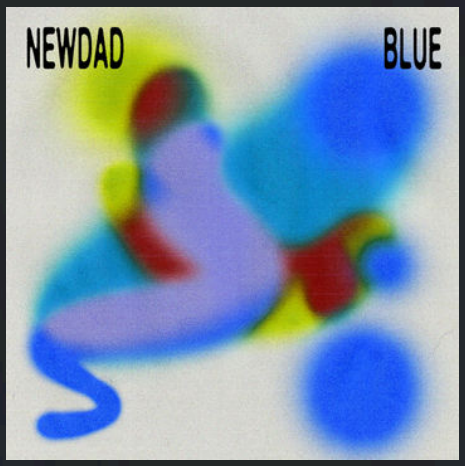
Revisiting this so
and definitely mo
accusatory tone
aimed outward.
This realization
especially terrible
and painful proc
long as I could
choose between
building, or lettin
never really one
in the ones that d
often ask yoursel
was worth it at a
angry, to grieve
wasted, and to lis
time, having ex
relationship that
heard the sublim
one-sided story th
accusing someon
its own reflection
us. Anyone lis
recognize themse

to "Blue" by a friend of mine all high school. We were sitting on rary, writing reports for a lab… nly remember so much. But what learly is the hit of melancholic lmost psychedelic melody, and of NewDad's vocalist Julie 16-year-old mind, the message k was pretty straightforward: ir heart broken, and they were

"Blue", at first you lose yourself struments. You see overcast but ds and smells. You feel cooled, And then, you're quickly noil. Mainly, the blatancy of the signals to you that something d. Unhappy from a love that fizzled out, you spit in defeat who wronged you, but loved es you feel vindicated. On that makes you live through a gh a song as if you were there felt each bout of conflict and its resolution. Your friend looks at on, eager to know whether you commendation. And you do. You

ation for the track, at 16 I was explore romantic relationships. ver some potentials before, but I ed a heartbreak of this caliber had only engaged with the song el – the subtextual implications o me at the time. Instead, I d the feeling of validation and int fingers at my failed romantic could I not when it's put so lodically in front of me?

ng a little older, perhaps wiser, re heartbroken, I found that the in "Blue" was never actually lt only looked that way at first. first occurred to me after an breakup at 18. It was a long ess of trying to hold on for as , before inevitably having to letting the resentment keep g go. In most relationships, it's person at fault (unless it is). But o end after a long struggle, you f if the time you spent together ll. It's part of the process to be , to feel like your time was ten to sad songs like "Blue." This perienced the push and pull wasn't meant to be, I finally inal messages in the formerly at "Blue" told. The angry hand e else was, in fact, pointing at this entire time. The figure was stening closely enough can lves in the blame.



This awareness gives the song a personal sting it previously lacked. "Blue" was always inherently accusatory, with or without the knowledge that we ourselves were included in the blame. The ambiguity in the lyrics is deliberate. Either party could be saying the words "While you took your time, you wasted mine," and at some point, almost everyone has felt this way. As the verse continues to unfold, there are points where this blame starts to converge: "We don't like the same things, I wanna talk and you just wanna drink/I wanna dance and you just wanna sit alone and think." Our catalogue of mismatched desires starts to sound less like a complaint and more like a recollection. There's really no clear villain here, just two people who can't meet in the middle. "Blue" forces both the singer and the listener to confront the uncomfortable truth that we are not always the victim we imagine ourselves to be. Sometimes we're the one who withdraws and who grows cold. "Blue" stings more now, because it refuses to let us sit safely outside the picture. It's a mirror held up to our own contradictions and shows us the moments we've been both the accused and the accuser.

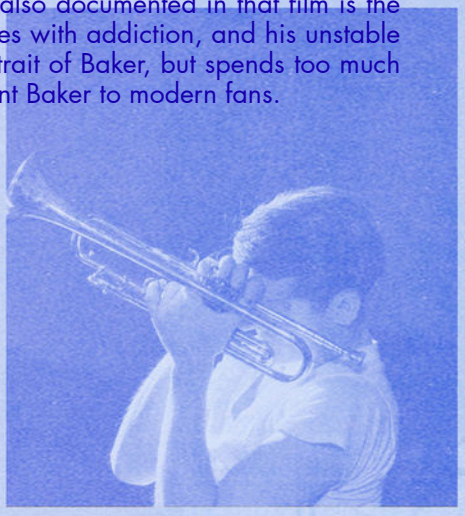
Aside from the fact that projection and shifting perspectives are psychological and literary devices that allow one to be vulnerable behind the mask of accusation, what makes "Blue" all the more compelling is its exploration of the duality of that perspective. The song initially invites the listener into a sense of validation and comfort before it slowly begins to sound uncomfortably familiar. Through subversively commenting on the way we put the blame on others for our own failures, faltering, and hurt, "Blue" shows how, in reality, this behavior is a reflection of the self. In a musical landscape often dominated by either escapism or indulgence, this illusion of perspective elevates the track beyond your typical post-breakup narrative. Moreover, "Blue" stands out for courage, asking difficult questions about accountability, guilt, and the blurred lines between parties who find themselves in unhappy emotional entanglements. Some parts of the song may even nudge towards abusive territory. For a retrospective on the teenage experience of heartbreak, it is wildly expansive.

Finally, this balance between vulnerability and strength, as well as their unique sound, exemplary in "Blue," is part of what has defined NewDad's rise. "Blue" is one of the first songs NewDad released in 2020. Before "Blue," there were three other singles, "How," "Swimming," and "Cry" respectively. Their work often swims in melancholy, which you can tell from the song titles, but never in fragility. It is also apparent that NewDad has been building a reputation for blending shoegaze, dream pop, and post-punk influences into a sound that is both atmospheric and emotionally direct, while still remaining very fresh. The way they jump between pop and alternative rock from song to song is reminiscent of The Cure, and the emphasis of atmosphere in their instrumentals is evocative of Cocteau Twins, My Bloody Valentine, and even Beach House. The more colorful and clearer lens stems from their formative experiences of adolescence in a more modern time, as well as having that elusive Irish touch.

Even after the release of their debut EP *Waves* in 2021, more singles, and whopping full length albums *Madra* and *Altar* in the five years following "Blue," the track remains one of NewDad's most popular releases across all music streaming platforms. This enduring popularity reflects the complexity and the emotional relevance of "Blue," where ultimately, neither view, accusatory or reflective, is incorrect. I immensely appreciate this iridescence, which allows the song to not only align with the views of a 16-year-old me, but continues to stay relevant as I venture into my adult relationships. NewDad recognizes that at the end of the day, both parties are to blame to some extent. No matter how you look at it, both the accused and accuser are a singular, meshed effusion of you and that person you don't speak to anymore. Your complexions will go in and out of focus, as the many grievances in your relationship come to light in a hazy memory, and bleary eyes. The dull poke of guilt, accusations, and hopefully – remission.

Chet Baker.

When jazz vocalist and trumpeter Chet Baker died in 1988, he was a beloved elder statesman. After a turbulent period marked by drug abuse and other personal issues, he had finally reached a point of critical and commercial success comparable to his heyday in the 1950s. This is documented in Bruce Weber's mostly great documentary Let's Get Lost. Weber, a fashion photographer by trade, approaches Baker like a model: glamourizing him at every turn, focusing on his best angles, and surrounding him with a crowd of adoring young fans. However, also documented in that film is the uglier side of Baker's life. His misfortunes, his struggles with addiction, and his unstable family life. The film attempts to paint a complete portrait of Baker, but spends too much time building up the mythos that has come to represent Baker to modern fans.



BY: OWEN ROHERTY.

Chet Baker made great music. To many modern listeners, his voice, delicate and effeminate, was the most defining aspect of his music. It's fragile, it's lived-in, it's relatable. The songs Baker chose to sing possess these qualities as well, heartbreak being their most consistent theme. The gentleness that Baker brings to his renditions of these jazz standards which make up his most famous work likely also contributes to his image: a tortured soul who tragically died (relatively) young as his demons finally caught up with him.

Baker fell from his balcony at a hotel in Amsterdam, heroin and cocaine in his room and in his body. Many of the stories that fans encounter focus on this angle: his drug addiction. It led to multiple prison stints, and a 1966 assault that left him unable to play the trumpet for years. Baker is a victim in this reading. An outcast who struggled to find his place in a world that couldn't understand his talent. This isn't really true, though. Baker struggled, for sure, but he was a successful musician for much of his life, and the Chet Baker story often repeated in modern media tends to neglect the people around him.

Bruce Weber's Let's Get Lost makes some attempts to analyze the myth of Baker, but much of it gets lost in a mix of staged scenes of younger fans fawning over Baker, not to mention those where Baker exaggerates his own exploits. Where the documentary really shines is in its interviews with Baker's wives, lovers, and children. While much of the film attempts to paint Baker as a misunderstood genius, the people that actually know him reject this notion. In fact, Ruth Young, a vocalist who had a relationship with Baker in the '70s, openly admits that Baker was impulsive, manipulative, and above all, not very intelligent. Most of the women interviewed in the documentary have similar things to say. In their eyes, Baker was not the effortlessly cool, soft hearted hipster that the public saw. He was a rash, ill-natured vagrant, frequently drifting between women and leaving most of them in the dust. The most appalling example of this is with his wife, Carol Ann Jackson. They married in 1964, but by the time the documentary was filmed, Baker rarely spent time at home. Jackson was left to raise their children alone, and while they never officially divorced, it's clear that Baker had no interest in continuing their relationship in any meaningful way. Baker meanders his way through life, never taking anything—relationship or otherwise—seriously. Of course, his treatment of women doesn't end with abandonment. Several mention physical abuse. The documentary glosses over much of this, probably intending for the audience to dismiss these incidents as drug-induced violence. Drug-induced or not, it doesn't matter. Baker was a piece of shit.

In many ways, Let's Get Lost is a spectacular musical documentary. It covers almost the entire career of its subject without feeling overloaded, and it's shot beautifully in black and white film. But it spends most of its runtime trying to explain the supposed genius of Baker. Weber's interest in the people around Baker is based only on his interest in Baker himself. The women aren't there to tell their own stories, they're there to tell Chet Baker's. The documentary can't really be taken as-is. You need to look past the superficial self-aggrandizing to appreciate its value. Let's Get Lost contains possibly the only interviews that show Baker for who he really was, but they're buried in a sea of vainglorious scenes dead-set on enshrining Baker as a tortured artist. He lived much of his life dependent on drugs, and was back living with his parents by the end of the '60s. Yet he made great music despite it all. But more importantly, Baker tortured those around him. He barely saw his children, he barely saw his wife. He took advantage of his status to sleep with women, he hit them, and he left them behind. Baker isn't worth venerating.

"Separate the art from the artist" is a common refrain you'll hear online when any sort of allegation comes out about a beloved creative, but in the case of Baker, that's impossible. His music relies on his image. He sang songs about heartbreak, about lost love, about relationships gone bad, about falling in love too easily; he needs you to see him as a delicate, lonely person. And he was. But it's important to understand why he was lonely, why he was depressed, why he seemed to be so consistently heartbroken. It was his own fault. You can't separate his music from the person Baker was. Chet Baker was Chet Baker. He put himself into every word he sang, and those words may have been sung prettily, but they usually didn't tell a pretty story. *Let's Get Lost* gives us so much of the Baker story, but its portrayal of Baker doesn't go deep enough. He was a complicated man, and his story should be told in full, warts and all.

DESIGNED BY CATHERINE HOU

A PASSIONATE DEFENSE OF SLOAN'S *NAVY BLUE*

Written by Kate Howden
Designed by Serena Hao

In 1998, when director Sofia Coppola was in town filming The Virgin Suicides, Toronto was in the midst of a passionate love affair with a Halifax rock band called Sloan. After hearing the band nonstop around the city, she was spurred to include one of the singles on the film's soundtrack. As far as Canadian bands went, Sloan were on top of the world in the 1990s: they were signed to Geffen Records in 1992 having only released their first EP, and their songs consistently topped Canadian charts. Additionally, Sloan shone a spotlight on Halifax as a breeding ground for great music, becoming far and away the most successful band of the "Halifax pop explosion," which also featured such acts as Eric's Trip and Plumtree. Sloan was touted by Geffen and music writers of the early 1990s as being "Canada's Nirvana." Despite Sloan's undeniable success and influence on the Canadian music landscape, Sloan are treated like little more than a niche legacy act today. While you'd be hard-pressed to find a Canadian dad who doesn't have "Money City Maniacs" on his playlist, the majority of Sloan's catalogue is rarely discussed in music circles. But this is a travesty, because in a perfect world, Sloan's 1998 album *Navy Blues* would be one of the most celebrated and well-remembered installments in the Canadian rock canon.

Although *Navy Blues* wasn't Sloan's biggest commercial success, it's by far the most essential album in their catalogue because of the new musical territory that they explore. Sloan's first two albums are very obviously influenced by bands in the mid-'90s alternative scene like The Breeders and My Bloody Valentine, and it wasn't until the release of their third album, *One Chord to Another*, that Sloan would start experimenting with a more retro sound. In their following release, *Navy Blues*, Sloan are fully in their element, pulling from '60s influences while incorporating clean electric guitars and heavier riffs. The album's opener, "She Says What She Means," sets the tone with a '70s hard rock riff that shows that Sloan mean business. The song's stop-start guitars complement its lyrics, which illustrate the confusion that entails when you can never figure out what your girlfriend is thinking. Luckily, it doesn't end here, because there's no shortage of rock bangers on the record. "Money City Maniacs" is, in fact, as good as everyone says it is. From the air raid siren that opens the track to the band's defiant hey you!s, there's no wonder why the song still rings in hockey arenas across the country.

The softer tracks are great, too: "C'mon C'mon" is a bouncy, almost saccharine piano-driven track that soars thanks to the use of falsetto by frontman Chris Murphy. "Chester the Molester" is a hilarious and weirdly empathetic tale about a creep at a bar trying to get some action. Sloan don't reinvent the wheel on *Navy Blues*, and one can hear clear homages to bands like The Kinks, Cheap Trick, and The Raspberries. However, there is a clear ethos of '90s irony and a unique blend of retro sounds that make the album much more than simply a rehash of previous works.

Ultimately, *Navy Blues* occupies a unique space in the Canadian rock catalogue. Canada in the late 1990s was dominated by the downtempo, reflective Kingston scene and bands riding the American post-grunge wave. In comparison, *Navy Blues* is unapologetically in-your-face and bright. Sloan faced an even more hostile environment in the 2000s, when Canada came to be known for fostering serious (and occasionally very pretentious) indie bands like Arcade Fire and Broken Social Scene. With the advent of the internet, the musical border between Canada and the United States blurred, and you couldn't just be huge in Canada anymore to be taken seriously. This was not the environment for Sloan's brand of unserious power-pop to flourish. Perhaps Sloan were also victims of political circumstance: this was the Canada of the 21st century, and it was time to get serious. It was Mike Harris's Ontario and Ralph Klein's Alberta. Austerity was in vogue, and fun was out. But don't Canadians deserve to have fun sometimes? This album deserves recognition because it represents the music of the optimistic, end-of-history late '90s, and also that it's a really good time. Ultimately, what's most important about *Navy Blues* is that it kicks ass, and that alone makes it worth celebrating.

Struggle To Find Your Skin:

Summerteeth a Melancholic Synth Pop Masterpiece

Written by
Leith Teebi

Designed by
Louise Lee

A man kills his lover on the side of a gray-blue port; he gives no real explanation for the murder, but burdens us with the vicious fact that he buries the body in a fireworks display and watches the bright sparks rain over him. Everything he does is drawn back to the sea, from the blood he spills to the moments he falls in love with her. After leaving behind everything He's carried home on the train from "Embarcadero skies," via Chicago."

"Via Chicago" is only one of the many little stories told throughout Wilco's fourth studio album, *Summerteeth*. Released in 1999, a brilliant work that marked a drastic shift from what Wilco and its frontman, Jeff Tweedy, were known for. At this point in their careers, Tweedy had become a mainstay in the alt-country and "cow-punk" scenes. His role as one-half of the band Uncle Tupelo, alongside the release of Wilco's critically acclaimed double EP *Being There*, allowed Tweedy to showcase his musical mastery of the genre. *Summerteeth* is a direct left turn: a blue-filled, melancholic, synth-pop swerve in the road. The beauty in the album is not the fact that it covers a breadth of emotion, but the duality that is formed through exploring this range of emotions. I don't just mean the sadness of feeling blue, and not just the coldness associated with it, but every shade and tint of blue is felt through this album. From the happiness of an azure sky to the misery of being spoiled by dark rain, no feeling is left untouched.

The song "She's a Jar" comes to mind first in this context. In the first verse, Tweedy, over a lightly strummed acoustic guitar and a low, droning organ, speaks the words "she begs me not to miss her." It already signals a break between two hearts, but what makes this line superbly intense is the impact it has towards the end of the song. The structure is repeated when he sings, "she begs me not to hit her." This is a devastating turn, reframing what came before in a harsher, darker light. A relationship that once seemed fragile now feels terrifying.

At times, *Summerteeth* contradicts its lyrics with the orchestration on tracks, creating conflicting feelings. Take the title track: the lyrics "He hits snooze twice before he dies" are sung over possibly the most upbeat track on the album. A shimmering upbeat Rhodes keyboard played alongside an acoustic guitar, babbling brooks, birds chirping and the closest thing we get to a guitar filled with twang on the album. The song is pastoral and sunny, and yet, lyrically, it is suicide made into routine. The clash makes the song one of the most interesting on the album—the bright azure surface streaked with indigo undertow.

Even the duplicity of colour blue comes in with the instrumentation alone, warping pop synths over acoustic ballads, making traditionally solid folk songs into textured, surreal works that feel grander than the instrumentation itself. The song "How To Fight Loneliness" is at its core a completely okay acoustic ballad about fighting loneliness and "Shining your teeth to meaningless." It delves into what it means to smile so that you don't look and feel so alone. The band takes this foundation and completely transforms it into a piece of psychedelic pop, with synths and reversed pianos that circle each other. Every choice of instrument feels wrong but turns out very right. Everywhere this album goes, contradiction follows.

The arrangement on the album can also sound blue. The instrumental peak of the album, "Pieholden Suite," opens with a brief poem that plays a relationship's peaks in reverse. Tweedy starts the song with the words "I still love you/But you know how I've been untrue" and ends the poem with "In the beginning/Whenever we kissed, we were surprised/To find so much inside." During the poem, the production feels sparse, with your attention drawn specifically to Tweedy's singing and the Beach Boys' style harmonies swirling in the background. As the lyrics draw to a close, the instruments fade out and the bass comes back in with a slow, pulsing beat, which introduces the next part of the song. No lyrics are present in "Pieholden Suite" after the poem, but you know exactly what the band is saying: even after heartbreak and guilt, there was still beauty in the relationship. Trumpets and synths enter, and the song swells magnificently as a banjo plays over the top of an organ at the same time. The song is a perfect demonstration of Wilco's ability to create fully orchestrated, eclectic instrumental pop songs.

"In the beginning we closed our eyes/ Whenever we kissed we were surprised to find so much inside"

To listen to *Summerteeth* is to be submerged. A shining light in "I'm Always In Love" follows a drowning "We're Just Friends." Not even Jeff Tweedy can escape the drowning of blue, but air gets pushed back into his lungs anyway. Wilco begs to remind you that every feeling you have will stay, and every bruise still goes blue.

Summerteeth wants you to "Struggle to find [its] skin." (Can't Stand It).

"The way things go/You get so low/ Struggle to find your skin."

"IT WON'T BE THIS BLEAK FOREVER

(and I Hope You're Right)"

Written by Finch Strub
Designed by Manu Rocha

I've been a connoisseur of sad music since I could remember. Even when listening to my parents' CDs in the car, I'd request tracks like Rihanna's "Man Down," Tracy Chapman's "Behind the Wall," or Falco's "Jeanny." As I grew up (and got increasingly more depressed), my tastes shifted from the brooding sensibilities of emo and pop punk to anything with a man and an acoustic guitar. Despite my dad's insistence that I should listen to something happier, I still find that most of the songs in my playlists range anywhere from mildly melancholy to full-on devastating. This past year, I've started to wonder if the sad bands I'm so attached to could ever veer in a more positive direction. Are they doomed to be miserable forever? Am I? So, I decided to look to some of my favourite bands to figure out if it really does get better. Worst comes to worst, I'll stop buying records and start buying Lexapro.

Spanish Love Songs

This band found me in the dead of summer while I was working 56 hours a week. Known for lamenting about everything from passive suicidality to being broke well into your 30s, Spanish Love Songs is easily quotable and deeply relatable. They released their debut album *Giant Sings The Blues* in 2015, and have been busting out the midwest emo jams ever since. Frontman Dylan Slocum, recognizable for his omnipresent vibrato and unfortunate last name, is the best way to measure the consistency of SLS' sadness. On "Brave Faces, Everyone" Slocum lays his deepest fears out to dry, giving us lyrics like, "Sometimes I want to vanish completely, and call in sick from life/I woke up and didn't feel better, I don't know why I act surprised."

It seems that he's the kind of guy that stays up well into the night overthinking about the state of the world. When I first heard their music, I thought, "Wow, here's a group of people that just get it." Every time something in my life goes wrong, I know I can retreat into the waiting sonic arms of *Brave Faces Everyone* and feel completely understood. As I meandered through their discography, I found that while Spanish Love Songs' music gets less heavy in terms of guitar riffs and drums, their lyrics do not. Despite their thematic consistency, the songwriting has evidently progressed. These days, they lean harder into more narrative-based tracks, rather than just filling three minutes with candid experiences of depression. As much as I want Slocum to be happy, I think I'd miss the raw ache of his voice and the viscerality of his songs. Like he says, "I swear to god I'm an optimist," and I guess I should be too.

Death Cab for Cutie

As Seth Cohen from The O.C. would have you know, indie legends Death Cab for Cutie are the soundtrack for moody collegiate white guys everywhere. Though not depressing in the same way as the other bands on this list, the Seattle-based quintet have been striking an emotional chord with listeners since they first stepped onto the scene in 1998. It's hard to say whether their music got more positive over the years, or if the band's members just matured beyond yearning for girls at dingy bars. I will say that their saddest songwriting days are long behind them: *Plans* (2005), *Transatlanticism* (2003), and *The Photo Album* (2001) easily house their most heartbreaking tracks. Hearing lyrics like "You may tire of me as our December sun is setting/'Cause I'm not who I used to be" definitely had an impact on me when I was in middle school and feeling misunderstood. Having seen them live a few years ago, I can confirm that Ben Gibbard's vocals have always had the gentle power to make millennials cry. Though there's a clear difference to be made between a sad song and a slow song with this band, the two often go hand in hand. Death Cab make music for staring out bus windows on rainy days, mourning versions of yourself that never came to fruition, and laying wine drunk on your kitchen floor. I've spent many late nights looping "A Lack Of Color" and feeling sorry for myself. To the people I've drunk texted while in the state: please forward any complaints to Mr. Gibbard. Times have changed for this slowly graying group of guys. While they still toss the occasional devastating track alongside the standard indie fare of their more recent albums, these days being melancholy no longer feels as if it's at the forefront of their music. Though I often wish for something new to accompany me on my many late nights, I'm glad that their melancholy lived and died with the early 2000s. After all, Ben Gibbard needs that spare time to run ultra marathons and drink hipster coffee.

My Chemical Romance

Let's end on a high note, shall we? My Chemical Romance has always preached that things will get better eventually, and their music is a clear reflection of that. They started off rough, battling addiction, depression and reckoning with the mammoth event that was 9/11, but rose to more positive heights until they disbanded in 2013. Their debut record, *You Brought Me Your Bullets, I Brought You My Love*, remains an all-timer because of the pure agony you can hear in the vocals. Recorded in a basement on a shoestring budget while singer Gerard Way battled with an ever-growing tooth abscess, the New Jersey cold will leech through your headphones and chills you to your bones. It's rough around the edges, but the devastation and ragtag lyrics are part of what makes this album so fraught with emotion. It's a great album for when you need something noisy to tune out all your thoughts. MCR have always been some version of emo, therefore automatically subscribing (or perhaps dooming?) themselves to a lifelong of making pretty depressing music. This trend continued with the *Three Cheers For Sweet Revenge*, giving us deep lyrics like "I'm not okay" repeated ad infinitum. Despite being a little too on the nose for my taste, it's still a sentiment that rings true, especially when you've got a shaggy haircut and too much black eyeliner. The vocals are yowly, the guitars are plentiful, and the vibes are iconic. Despite having most of their discography feature bleak themes that emo kids have been latching onto for years, their final album departed from that entirely. My Chemical Romance ditched their black clothes for neon colours and campy sounds. They went out in a blaze of synths, dancey snares and catchy riffs, and I wouldn't have it any other way. To see these four guys recover in real time proved to every sad kid with a pair of headphones that there's life beyond depression. That final record wasn't too shabby, either.

By my expert analysis, it seems that the bands I love will eventually start singing about sunshine and rainbows, trading in their small beanies and sleeve tattoos for something more Wiggles-esque. Jokes aside, it's nice to know that things do get easier, even if it is in microscopic strides. With each new release, both myself and the members of these bands get older, travelling further around the sun and away from the melancholy. Perhaps by the time I start to feel better, there will be music to match it. To quote Spanish Love Songs one last time, "It won't be this bleak forever, and I hope you're right."

Blue Velvet

Written by Ava Feir

It's a Strange World...

Through strikingly saturated stills juxtaposed against themes of hidden lives and melancholia, David Lynch's 1986 cult-classic *Blue Velvet* leaves a mark on its viewer. Lynch's use of music within the movie to convey emotions is masterful—with a mix of classic 1960s nostalgia, and modernist classical themes, Lynch creates a unique atmosphere within the film.

Blue Velvet is a noir-esque film in which the main character, Jeffrey returns from college to the small, idyllic Lumberton; however, his finding of a severed ear in a local field sparks his investigation into the town's underground. Jeffrey works with the police chief's daughter, Sandy, to find out the truth of what is going on in town. This investigation leads them to a nightclub where they find singer Dorothy Vallens, who seems to be caught in the middle of all of the dark crimes occurring. Further pursuit leads Jeffrey to Frank Booth, the leader of a dangerous group of men, who holds Dorothy's husband and child hostage. The film contrasts these dark, underground themes with nostalgic diners, cheery radio announcements, and white picket fences, juxtaposing the idealistic Lumberton with the sinister truth beneath.

The soundtrack features original music by the composer Angelo Badalamenti, who has worked with Lynch on a number of impressive works, most famously the soundtrack to *Twin Peaks*. Badalamenti has helped to create the recognizable Lynchian style we know and love, with iconic tracks like "Laura Palmer's Theme," "Mulholland Drive," and many more. Badalamenti began working with Lynch in 1986, and their first collaboration was *Blue Velvet*. He was initially hired to coach Isabella Rossellini on singing the title track for the film, but only after Badalamenti was able to realize Lynch's exact vision for the song "Mysteries of Love" was he asked to score the entire movie. Though Lynch and Badalamenti only worked together on *Blue Velvet, Twin Peaks,* and *Mulholland Drive*, their collaboration is unique. Badalamenti even referred to it as his "second-best marriage." They were able to create music with a distinct aesthetic quality, as the duo would sit down at the keyboard, with Badalamenti improvising, and Lynch narrating his vision. This is how "Laura Palmer's Theme" was created.

Designed by Miya Mastrofini

The classical pieces written for the movie were inspired by Shostakovich's Symphony No. 15. Shostakovich composed many of his pieces under Soviet-era Russia and had to conform his pieces to align with Stalin's propaganda, which was intolerant to any modernist creative expression. This reflects the themes of the movie, where Frank controls all of Dorothy's creative expressions as a nightclub singer. Badalamenti's compositions evoke the same sense of danger and nerves that Shostakovich's do, which pairs beautifully with the slow corruption that occurs during the plot of the movie.

Frank's control as is shown with the blue velvet robe that Dorothy wears throughout the film. Jeffrey notices that in the back of the robe, a small rectangle is cut out of the hem. It is revealed that Frank carries this small piece of velveteen fabric around, a physical symbol of his power over her. This control also carries throughout the soundtrack, with the repetitive use of the song "Blue Velvet," not only Bobby Vinton's version, but also as the song Dorothy sings in the nightclub. In the nightclub rendition, Badalamenti's piano drives the song, while the low, breathy vocals overlay. Though Vinton's version of the song has an upbeat quality withvery '60s doo-wop backing vocals, Dorothy's version highlights the song's melancholia. The soft, melodic fade out of the piano along with the lyric "I still can see blue velvet through my tears," evokes a sense of mourning and bitter nostalgia. The more the song is used within the film, the more this sense of mourning grows. Its lulling piano and soft hi-hat become sinister and unsettling, as it is clear that the song is a symbol of Frank's power over Dorothy. The song's tone shifts and darkens as more and more is uncovered about the dark secrets surrounding the nightclub.

Roy Orbison's "In Dreams" becomes twisted, as it is lip-synced to by Ben, one of Frank's men. Frank takes Jeffrey on a 'joyride' to confront him about being with Dorothy, though it is expected that Jeffrey is going to get beat up, it becomes even more frightening when Ben begins singing about a "candy-coloured clown." Lynch's choice to use such an upbeat, classic, and seemingly happy song in a such a dark and disturbing scene completely shifts the song's perceived tone. The lyrics "In dreams, you're mine, all of the time" ring as eerie, especially when Frank stops the performance right after that lyric because he begins to have a strange adverse reaction to the song. And then, when the song is used for a second time, Frank asks one of his goons to play "candy-coloured clown" as he threatens Jeffrey with a knife. Frank repeats the "In dreams I walk with you/In dreams I talk to you" before he knocks Jeffrey out. The song's melodic strings, plucky bassline, and dreamy backing vocals turn chilling, as Dorothy's screams contrast with the chorus.

Not only do Lynch and Badalamenti utilize music in the movie, but the stark lack of music in certain scenes also creates a chilling atmosphere. Particularly in the famous opening sequence, beginning withVinton's "Blue Velvet" over images of roses on a white picket fence. Then, the song begins to fade slightly as a man watering his grass falls to the ground. The camera zooms in on the grass, moving deeper and deeper, until there is no longer any music, and all we hear and see are beetles hissing and moving underneath the earth. But after this dark and unsettling montage, it bluntly cuts into Lumberton's cheery theme song, with the image of a nostalgic "Welcome to Lumberton" billboard. These extremely stark shifts in tone set the atmosphere and theme of the movie extremely well. In this beginning scene, the happy and idyllic is juxtaposed bluntly with the dark and macabre, but throughout the rest of the film, these two sides seep into each other, as is represented with the use of "In Dreams" and "Blue Velvet."

Badalamenti's original theme, "Mysteries of Love," was inspired by This Mortal Coil's "Song to the Siren," which couldn't be licensed to use in the film. Lynch described his vision for "Mysteries of Love" to Badalamenti by saying that it "should be a song that floats on the sea of time." The song completely achieves this vision, with eerie but angelic vocals, and piano and synth so echoing and hazy that they almost feel like they're underwater. The song captures the dream-like qualities of the movie perfectly, with its floating, cloudy sound. It provides a perfect ending to the film, as it plays along with the last line: "It's a strange world, isn't it?" The final montage of the film calls back to the beginning, with a zoom in on an ear. However, this time it is Jeffrey's, and he is finally at peace. It also shows Dorothy reuniting with her son.

The soundtrack to *Blue Velvet* evokes the wonderful melancholia that permeates Lynch's works. Every still and every sound in the movie is intentional and meaningful. The mix of Shostakovich-inspired compositions with dreamy pop-ballads and the masterpiece that is "Mysteries of Love" forms an unforgettable soundtrack that pairs ever so well with Lynch's artistic visuals. All of this masterfully shapes the strange world that is *Blue Velvet.*

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